



HUMAN
RIGHTS
CAMPAIGN

Gay Marriage a! action alert

1101 14th Street NW Washington, D.C. 20005

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The Defense of Marriage Act

Religious political extremists have orchestrated the introduction of anti-gay marriage bills in at least 34 states and the U.S. Congress in an election-year strategy to score political points through gratuitous gay-bashing. DOMA, the "Defense of Marriage Act" is now before the U.S. Congress, defining marriage in federal law as a "legal union between one man and one woman," and also attempts to give states the authority to reject the legality of same-sex marriages performed in any other state.

Marriage between two individuals of the same sex is not currently legal anywhere in the United States. The Hawaii courts are currently considering whether the state of Hawaii will extend equal marriage rights to same sex couples, but a final decision is not due for about 2 years. The opposition will claim that a decision is imminent, however the court action scheduled for this September is a lower court trial. The Hawaii Supreme Court will probably not consider this issue until 1997, with a final decision coming as late as 1998. Thirty-four legislatures have considered this issue. Seventeen of those states decided against moving forward with legislation.

DOMA is another example of the general, pervasive discrimination gay men and lesbians face in society. Not only can we not marry each other anywhere in this country, we can be fired from our jobs simply for being lesbian or gay. No federal law protects people from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

Talking Points

- DOMA is clearly an election-year ploy by religious political extremists - it purports to address a Hawaii court decision that is still years away.
- Congress has bigger, more important issues to contend with. Anti-gay members of Congress are introducing mean-spirited and inappropriate legislation to create a wedge in the American electorate.
- The so-called "Defense of Marriage Act" is nothing more than gratuitous gay-bashing. It does not provide any positive defensive measures for marriages or families. Contrary to the rhetoric of the religious political extremists, one can honor the relationship between a man and woman without attacking lesbian and gay people or their relationships.

Take Action!

It is clear that the Defense of Marriage Act is an election year strategy attacking lesbian and gay Americans in order to bolster support for Congressional extremists that lack a pro-active, positive agenda. Write or call your member of Congress today and urge them to strongly oppose and refuse to co-sponsor the "Defense of Marriage Act," - introduced in the House as H.R. 3396 by Representatives Bob Barr (R-GA) and Steve Largent (R-OK) and in the Senate as S. 1740 by Sen. Don Nickles (R-OK).

Sample Letter to Members of Congress

Address your letters to:

The Honorable _____
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable _____
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Representative or Senator:

I am writing to urge you to strongly oppose H.R. 3396, the so-called "Defense of Marriage Act," introduced by Representatives Bob Barr(R-GA) and Steve Largent(R-OK). [If writing to Senators, this sentence would read - I am writing to urge you to strongly oppose S. 1740, the so-called "Defense of Marriage Act," introduced by Senator Don Nickles (R-OK).] This legislation is nothing more than a coordinated election year strategy by religious political extremists to score political points on the backs of gay men and lesbians.

Same sex marriage is not legal anywhere in the United States. A court case in the state of Hawaii is currently looking at the issue, but a final decision is not expected for about 2 years. This kind of premature legislation is nothing more than an attempt to divide the country by beating up on gay men and lesbians. Congress should be attending to the business of the country, not attacking American citizens.

Marriage is a basic human right. The decision of whom to marry is a deeply personal one that should not be interfered with by the federal government. Despite the rhetoric of the religious political extremists, one can honor the relationship between a man and woman without attacking lesbian and gay people or their relationships.

I again urge you to oppose this unnecessary and divisive legislation. I look forward to hearing your views on this matter.

Sincerely,

Sample Letter to the Editor

This battle will largely be fought in your home-town newspapers in the 'Letters to the Editor' columns of your newspapers. Please send letters to your newspapers and personalize them with information relevant to your state or city - this will increase the likelihood that they will be printed.

Dear Editor:

The debate on same-sex marriage has now, inappropriately, reached Congress with the introduction of the so-called "Defense of Marriage Act." Same sex marriage is not currently legal anywhere in the United States, even though (info from YOUR state such as: our own legislature just passed another unnecessary bill prohibiting it!) A court case in the state of Hawaii is currently looking at the issue, but no one expects a final decision for another 2 years. I'm writing because I'm tired of religious political extremists orchestrating the introduction of anti-gay marriage bills - in 34 states to date! - to create a wedge among Americans in an election year when our country needs unity, not more division. Congress should be attending to the business of the country, not attacking American citizens!

Marriage is a basic human right. The decision of whom to marry is a deeply personal one that should not be interfered with by the federal government. It's time for our elected officials to stop bashing lesbian and gay Americans so that they can appear to have a political agenda: marriages and families can not be protected with hatred. Despite the rhetoric of the religious political extremists, one can honor the relationship between a man and woman without attacking lesbian and gay people or their relationships.

Sincerely,

Tips for Speaking on Talk Radio

- Know what you want to say. It's always good to jot down your ideas before calling. This will allow you to develop an organized, thoughtful argument.
- Stick to the main points! Don't be drawn into arguments that are off-message. When someone tries to engage you in a pointless discussion, go right back to the message.
- Keep your cool. A calm head is a thinking head, and we win points when we appear collected and prepared and our opposition looks like the hot-headed, irrational extremists that they are.
- Stick with what works. Use the talking points to frame your arguments. You are advancing the rhetoric of fairness and equality - not special rights.



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Action Alert is published monthly
by the Political Department of
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P.O. Box 1396
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Voter Registration

You've Got the Power.

The balance of power is in your hands. You have the power to vote — and to get your family, friends, co-workers and neighbors to vote for candidates who will support fairness and stand up to extremism. Elections for public office are often won by a slim margin of votes. Your active participation in registering people to vote this year will make all the difference on Election Day.

Religious political extremist groups like the Christian Coalition boast millions of members and multi-million dollar budgets. We can stop the extremists in their tracks by registering people to vote who will support fair-minded candidates. HRC has created a voter registration power kit to help you set up a voter registration drive in your organization or community.

When Congress passed the National Voter Registration Act — commonly called the “Motor Voter Law” — it swept away complicated state voter registration laws that kept millions of Americans off the voter rolls. The Motor Voter Law’s procedures for voter registration by mail mean that you can make voter registration easy for your organizations, members, volunteers and community.

The key to success in voter registration is to find those people who will vote for the candidates you support. There are many places you can find fair-minded people who will support fair-minded candidates. This list provides a few ideas to get you started.

Pride events.

National Coming Out Day events.

AIDS CLINICS AND SERVICE PROVIDERS.

Gay and Lesbian Organizations.

Gay and Lesbian Community Centers.

Gay and Lesbian Film Festivals.

Cafes, bars, bookstores and other meeting places.

Concerts, music festivals and other outdoor events.

Please call HRC's Action Network staff if you need help getting people registered in your community. 202.628.4160.

Extra Credit...

Our appreciation goes out to CBS for their fair portrayal of gay parents on Picket Fences. In the episode, a court finds in favor of a gay father who is challenged for child custody because of his sexual orientation and relationship with another man. You can send your comments to CBS careof:

Raymond Faiola

Director of Audience Services and Programming

555 W. 57th Street, 9th Floor

New York, NY 10019

Legislative Update

VICTORIES!!

HIV-Positive Military

Ryan White

D.C. Adoption

With the passage of the omnibus budget bill, Congress ended many months of hard work on your behalf and finally came to some conclusions involving three very important issues to our community. The Dornan provision to kick-out all HIV-positive service members was repealed. The Ryan White CARE Act was reauthorized, although there is some concern over one of the provisions. And, the issue of lesbian and gay people adopting children in the District of Columbia was reconciled so that lesbian and gay parents may obtain joint custody. Congratulations to all Action Network members for some hard fought victories.

Action Hero

This month we recognize the extraordinary contributions made by Don McCleary. Don passed away on April 14, 1996. Don served on the HRC board of directors since 1991 and most recently as co-chair. A long-time advocate for lesbian and gay equal rights and health issues, Don helped found HRC's Federal Club, the major donor program that funds a significant portion of our lobbying, organizing, campaign and public education work. In particular, Don played a key role in building HRC's presence in Dallas. Don is truly a hero to us all. As our prayers are with his partner and the rest of his family, it is in his memory that we continue our work.

HRC On-Line

<http://www.hrcusa.org>

Continue to get people registered by visiting HRC's Website at <http://www.hrcusa.org>. In our Campaign '96 forum, we have information about how to register in your state along with a link to the MTV Rock the Vote Website where you, your friends, family, co-workers and neighbors can register online.

Stand For Children

June 1, 1996

Washington, DC

on the mall

On June 1st, thousands of children and adults will descend on Washington, D.C. to Stand for Children. This non-partisan day is designed to revitalize your spirit, celebrate youth and join us together as an American community to do better for our children, young people and our families.

HRC is fully endorsing this event and we encourage you to join with us and other members of our community to Stand for Children. Increasingly, religious political extremists are attacking programs which serve the health and social welfare of gay and lesbian youth. It is essential for our community to rally around all young people and show our concern and support. We at HRC hope you will join us on June 1st to help represent gay and lesbian youth issues at this historic event.

Busses are being coordinated in cities around the country and information on housing is also available. If you are interested in attending and/or organizing a contingent from your area, please contact Stand for Children at 202.234.0095 or standinfo@mailback.com.



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Subject: Student Gay Life Survey
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Content-Type: text/plain; charset=us-ascii
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Gay marriage

Mage

Subj: GLAADAlert 06.03.96
Date: 96-06-03 12:17:24 EDT
From: glad@glaad.org (Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation)
Sender: owner-glaad-net@glaad.org

GLAADAlert

June 3, 1996

The GLAADAlert is the weekly activation tool of the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation

THE WALL BETWEEN CHURCH AND STATE

The May 27th issue of Time Magazine featured a thoughtful article on same gender marriage entitled, "Gay In The Eyes Of God; Marriage Is Just One Issue Christians Need To Face." By author and critic Wilfrid Sheed, the piece discusses the "wall between church and state."

Sheed defines the conflict over same gender marriage as the dichotomy between marriage as a civic institution and a religious institution. Whatever people's beliefs, Sheed contends all parties are going to have to face the issue and discuss it. Sheed also posits that the debate will eventually lead to certain questions: "What might God have had in mind, and is it significant that Christ never mentioned the subject?" Also, "What injustices may have been done to homosexuals under the old understanding, and what can be done to avoid more of them?"

Sheed concludes, "None of which means gay marriages are inevitable, only that something is. The running argument between what feels Christian and what the church currently practices actually seems to be approaching climaxes on several fronts at once right now, as the roles of priest and citizen and married couple all struggle to be reborn in harmony. But this time gays will undoubtedly be part of the equation and, if all goes well, part of the harmony."

Contact: Norman, Pearlstine, Editor-In-Chief, Time, 1271 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020, phone: 212.522.1212, e-mail: Letters@time.com

THE SPIN ON EXODUS

The June issue of Spin Magazine featured an expose entitled "Queer and Loathing," exploring the anti-gay conversion ministry known as Exodus. Writer Elizabeth Gilbert went undercover at the national Exodus conference in San Diego to investigate her piece, finding that "what the group does best is bring tormented gay Christians out of the closet." Gilbert relays that Exodus is set up more like "pop therapy" rather than a conversion ministry, using words like "recovering" and "redeem" rather than "cure."

In one of the most telling segments of her article, Gilbert interviews Michael Bussee, one of Exodus' co-founders. He explains that founding Exodus with his late lover Gary Cooper made them confront the shame they harbored about their sexualities and that as a result, they were able to abandon the group, renounce the idea of conversion and come out with pride as gay men.

that this is not an alternative for gay Christians to come out. She writes, "Bussee recalls one victim (of Exodus' pressure) who wrote in his suicide note, 'God will forgive me for killing myself. But He will never forgive me for having another homosexual thought.'"

Write Spin Magazine and thank them for their exposing the truth behind Exodus.

Contact: Bob Guccione, Jr., Editor & Publisher, Spin Magazine, 6 West 18th Street, New York, NY 10011, e-mail: spinonline@aol.com

TROUBLE IN TAMPA

Controversy arose when the Tampa Tribune refused to run a memorial submitted by Tampa resident Barry Adams in tribute to his longtime life partner Jack Girard. Although Adams intended to fully pay for the memorial, the Tribune policy states that memorials, "may only be taken from a spouse or a close family blood relative of the deceased, such as mother, father, son, daughter, husband, wife."

Write the Tampa Tribune and urge them to change their policy. Let them know that while gay men and lesbians may not yet legally be wed, our community's unions are just as strong.

Contact: Pat Jones, Tribune Classified Advertising Manager, Tampa Tribune, 202 S. Parker Street, Tampa, FL 33606-2395, phone 813.259.7580, fax 813-259-7676, e-mail: tecy45b@prodigy.com

from The Tampa Bay Gazette

CWA STRIKES

In their continuing effort to make the persecution of gay men and lesbians one of their top fundraising priorities, the Concerned Women for America (CWA) takes several shots at the gay and lesbian community in the April issue of the Family Voice, the organization's news magazine. In the issue, Reverend Jim Woodall, the Vice President of Management for the CWA, quotes Ephesians 6:12-13 that refers to demons responsible for the evils of the world, the same demons that he states drive the gay and lesbian civil rights movement.

In another article, the CWA continues to perpetuate grotesque lies about the gay community by "reporting" that gay men average "between 10 and 1,000 partners per year," and that they "regularly swallow semen and ingest the feces and urine of their partners." The article continues that "still, nothing under present law prevents active homosexuals - with or without AIDS - from working in food-handling professions, or with the elderly or young children, who are especially vulnerable to illness."

Contact: Beverly LaHaye, President, and Reverend Jim Woodall, Vice President of Management, Concerned Women for America, 370 L'Enfant Promenade, SW, Suite 800, Washington, DC 20024, phone: 202.488.7000, Jim Woodall's e-mail address: JWOOD10165@aol.com

from Freedom Writer



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The GLAADAlert is the weekly activation tool of the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation.

GLAAD is a national organization that promotes fair, accurate and inclusive representation of individuals and events in the media as a means of combating homophobia and all forms of discrimination based on sexual orientation or identity.

Copies of articles referred to in the GLAADAlert are available to our members by contacting GLAAD.

Contact GLAAD by e-mail at glaad@glaad.org or by phone at 213.658.6775 (Los Angeles), 212.807.1700 (New York), 413.586.8928 (Northampton), 503.224.5285 (Portland, Oregon), 202.986.1360 (Washington, DC) or 415.861.2244 (San Francisco).

Visit GLAAD's Web Site at <http://www.glaad.org>

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Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD)  
[glaad@glaad.org](mailto:glaad@glaad.org)  
VISIT THE GLAAD WEB SITE AT <http://www.glaad.org>!

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GLAAD promotes fair, accurate and inclusive representation as a means of challenging discrimination based on sexual orientation or identity.
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